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VICTORIAN ROW/OLD OAKLAND

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DRAFT

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Oakland Redevelopment Agency
October 31, 1975

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Project Description
B. Project History
C. Relationship to Local and Regional Plans

II. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. Physical Environment
B. Socio-Economic Environment

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A. Physical Environmental Impacts
B. Socio-Economic Environmental Impacts

IV. ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSAL IS IMPLEMENTED

V. MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED TO MINIMIZE THE PROJECT'S IMPACT

VI. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

VII. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF THE PEOPLE'S ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

VIII. IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

IX. GROWTH IMPACTS

X. ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONSULTED

MAPS

VICTORIAN ROW/OLD OAKLAND

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT

DRAFT

I. INTRODUCTION

A. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

1. Purpose and Objectives:

The primary purpose of the Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project is to return this series of historically significant late 19th century structures to viable economic use while maintaining their architectural character and the integrity of their grouping.

The project area is important in Oakland's history. Oakland was chartered in 1852 but did not become established as a commercial center until the transcontinental railway brought the first train to 7th and Broadway in 1869. By 1875 the commercial core of the City was centered on 9th Street between Broadway and Washington Streets. The majority of the buildings on this street were constructed between 1869 and 1878 and housed a number of activities including a post office, shops, a bank, lodging and later real estate and insurance offices. With the general shifting of commercial interests to the north, commercial uses in Victorian Row were replaced by business services. In the 30's the area began an economic and physical decline which has continued to the present. Today this area is a part of the "Skid Row" area in downtown Oakland. Most of the buildings are deteriorating and in danger of eventually being demolished.

Additional objectives of the Plan are as follows:

a) Restoration of the symbolic importance of the area as the 19th century commercial center of Oakland.

b) Retention of architecturally or historically significant structures in the area.

c) Creation of a special area which furthers the development of a variety of environmental experiences available in the Central District.

d) Elimination of physical deterioration in the Central District.

e) Continued encouragement of economic growth in the Central District.

The Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project is one of several redevelopment efforts aimed at the rejuvenation of the Central District of Oakland. This project, together with the City Center and Chinatown urban renewal projects, are the key elements in the program to restore Oakland's role as the regional center of the East Bay communities. The program attempts to stem economic and physical deterioration by balancing major new development with the retention of valuable existing resources. This is to provide an economically viable and aesthetically pleasing environment complete with a variety of choices for the citizens, visitors and employees of the City.

2. Location:

The Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project is located in downtown Oakland on the blocks bounded by 8th Street, 9th Street, Broadway and Washington Streets. The project also includes the corner parcel west of Washington Street at 9th Street, but excludes the parcel at the corner of 10th and Washington Streets. The site lies at approximately 37° 48' 15" north latitude and 122° 16' 22" west longitude. It is five blocks south of the Oakland City Hall and ten blocks north of the Oakland estuary.

3. Description of Proposal:

The project proposes the thorough renovation of architecturally significant structures on the project area. The exterior architectural character of the structures is to be preserved; the interiors are to be reconstructed for commercial and office use consistent with present day marketability of such space. It is anticipated that approximately 60,000 square feet of the 160,000 square feet of space in the structures will be developed for retail commercial use. This will be predominantly ground floor space and will include uses such as convenience goods and services, general retail, consumer services, restaurants, etc. The commercial emphasis will be on "specialty" type activities. The remaining 100,000 square feet, largely on the upper floors, will be developed for office use.

It appears that three of the structures on the site are neither historically significant nor architecturally compatible with other buildings in the project. These structures may be cleared and the land combined with other vacant land to provide parking for approximately 130 cars at least on an interim basis. At a future date, this

parking may be replaced with new construction, compatible with the rejuvenated buildings.

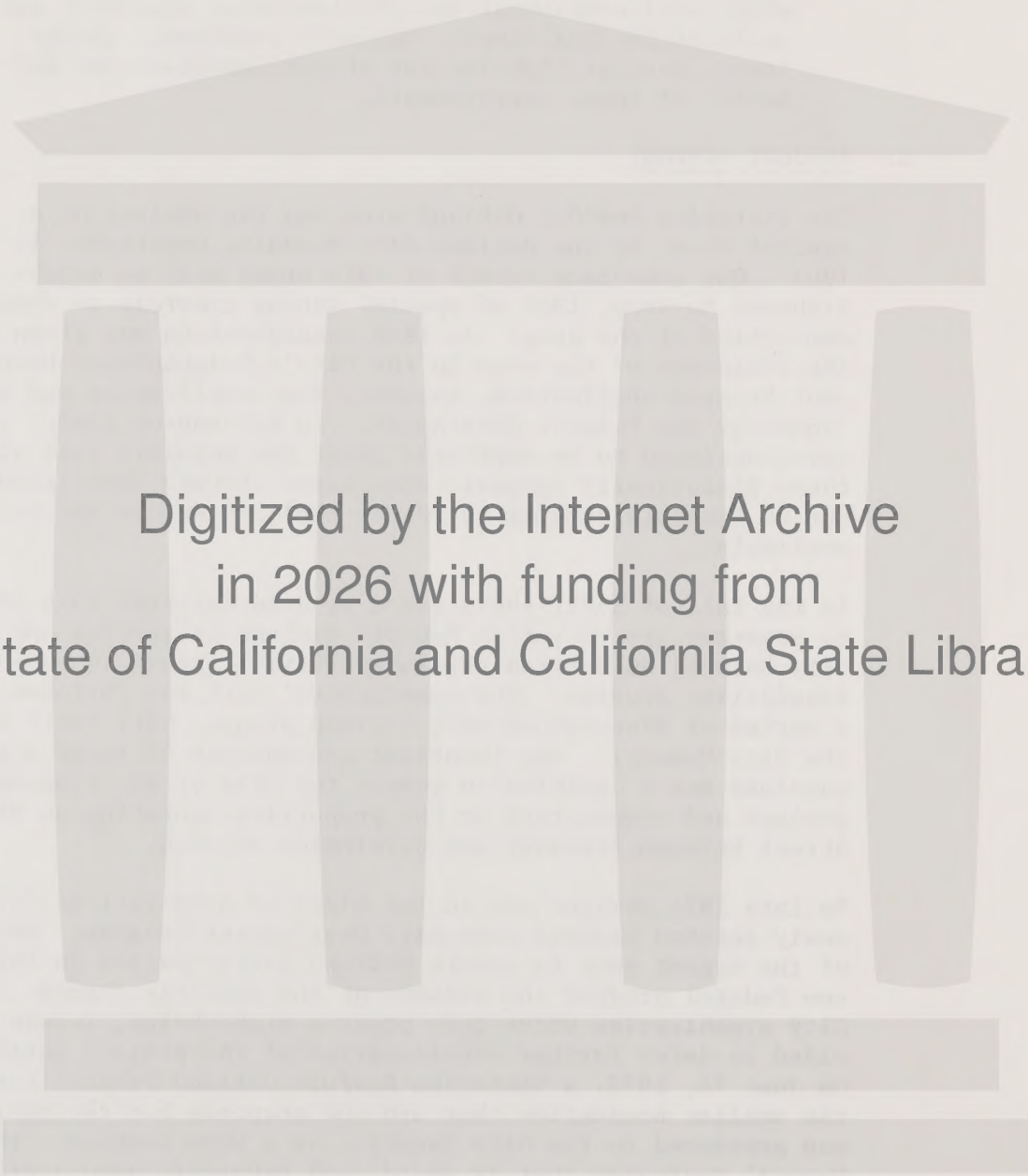
Public improvements are proposed in the project in order to create an aesthetically pleasing environment which will compliment the architectural character and scale of the buildings. Sidewalk treatment, street trees, special lighting and street furniture are examples of these improvements.

B. PROJECT HISTORY

The Victorian Row/Old Oakland area was the subject of a special study by the Oakland City Planning Department in 1967. One immediate result of this study was the establishment in July, 1967 of special zoning controls to deter demolition of the area. In 1969 consideration was given to the inclusion of the area in the City's Neighborhood Development Program application, however, that application was not funded by the Federal Government. In subsequent years, concern continued to be expressed about the possible loss of these historically valuable structures through demolition, but no feasible program to ensure their retention was yet available.

In the fall of 1973, there was a renewed interest in a project to preserve the Victorian Row/Old Oakland properties and the City Council authorized the Redevelopment Agency to undertake feasibility studies. The consultants' work was followed by a series of discussions with citizen groups, City staff and the City Council. One important consequence of these discussions was a decision to reduce the size of the proposed project and concentrate on the properties centering on 9th Street between Broadway and Washington Streets.

By late 1974 Oakland was in the midst of preparations for the newly enacted Federal Community Development Program. Because of the urgent need to ensure Oakland participation in this new Federal program and because of the possible changes in City organization which this program might bring, it was decided to defer further consideration of the project until 1975. On June 26, 1975, a Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project having the smaller boundaries that are now proposed for the project was presented to the City Council, at a work session. The Council indicated that it would look favorably upon a project provided that matters of financing and project execution could be satisfactorily resolved. This Council action set in motion the steps toward a public hearing in December 1975 to consider the establishment of a Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project within the framework of the Central District Urban Renewal Plan.



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C. RELATIONSHIP TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL PLANS

The Victorian Row/Old Oakland area is not dealt with in regional plans since it does not have a regional magnitude of impact. However, the area has long been recognized in local plans. Specifically, the area is identified in the 1966 Oakland Central District Plan, an officially adopted element of Oakland's Comprehensive Plan and treated in the following manner:

> In the Old City, proposed new activities should blend with existing ones as the area's full potential is developed. Its several subareas--including Chinatown and Victorian Row--as well as its interesting and historic atmosphere should be conserved and strengthened through renewal programs which emphasize design control and rehabilitation.[1]
>
> There are many fine late-Victorian structures along Broadway and Washington Streets. One group, however, stands out as the finest complete composition of Victorian architecture on the West Coast--the buildings on both sides of Ninth Street between Washington and Broadway.[2]
>
> Considerable interest has been expressed in the creation of a "Victorian Row" on this block. The structures, which are generally in good condition, could be repainted and their original facades restored. Existing signs could be replaced by new signs more appropriate to the architecture.[3]
>
> The project would provide excellent accommodations for a variety of activities including restaurants, antique stores, furniture dealers, interior decorators, and architects' offices. Many tools exist for the accomplishment of such a project, ranging from urban renewal, to zoning to a completely private project. Formation of a development corporation has been discussed by property owners.[4]

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[1]Oakland City Planning Commission, Oakland Central District Plan (Oakland, California: 1966), p. 45.

[2]Ibid., p. 46.

[3]Ibid., p. 47.

[4]Ibid.

The local policy mandate for local undertakings such as the Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project is found in the Oakland Policy Plan, adopted by the Council on October 24, 1972. Policy #4, in the category of land use and urban design reads as follows:

> Reminders of the past in the form of historical or architecturally valuable buildings should be retained whenever possible. An active program of restoration and preservation should be undertaken to make these buildings once again a functional element of the city.[5]

II. DESCRIPTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Natural Features:

The site is located on the west slope of an almost imperceptible knoll which rises to slightly over forty feet elevation above mean sea level. The site was urbanized many years ago altering natural drainage and eliminating natural vegetation and wildlife.

2. Man-Made Features:

The site covers most of two city blocks plus a portion of a third block. Ninth Street and Washington Street intervene. The streets (and attendant utilities) and 14 structures comprise the man-made features on the site. The structures, mostly constructed in the late 19th century, are predominantly two and three stories with basements. The buildings can be described as good examples of Victorian commercial architecture. Ornamentation, scale and fenestration of the individual buildings combine to create a unique composition which probably does not exist elsewhere in the western United States.

3. Geology and Soils:

While no soil tests have been made on the site itself, it can be assumed that the general properties are similar to the City Center site, two blocks to the north.

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[5]City of Oakland, Oakland Policy Plan, Adopted October 24, 1972 (Oakland, California), p. 11.

In 1971, a soils investigation of that site was made by Woodward Lundgren Associates who reported the following information.

> Roughly 1,000 feet (350m) of sediments cover the Franciscan Formation bedrock which is composed primarily of sandstone and chert. These sediments have been deposited over the past two million years, since the start of the deformation which has brought San Francisco Bay to its present shape. There are several types of sediment present. The earliest are clays of marine origin (Alameda Clays) which covered the bedrock to a total depth of approximately 900 feet (274m). The remaining 100 feet (30m) of deposits are primarily sands of terrestrial origin with some clayey and gravelly layers. These sands are thought to have been deposited by stream action, and then partially reworked by the wind into dunes. Covered by a thin layer of sandy soil, these dune deposits occupied much of what is now the downtown area prior to settlement by white men in the early 1800's.[6]

4. Seismicity:

The project site is in a seismically active area, as is most of the California costal region. The San Andreas Fault zone lies 16 miles (25.6 km) to the southwest, and the Berkeley-Hayward and Calaveras fault systems lie 3.5 miles (5.6 km) and 13 miles (21 km) to the northeast, respectively. While there may be some cracks or fractures in the alluvium or bedrocks beneath the site, these would not present problems to structures on the site.

According to the California Department of Water Resource literature, between 1934 and 1961 twelve earthquakes of Richter Magnitude 4.0 or greater were recorded having epicenters within 20 miles (32 km) of the site. These are summarized in tabular form on the following page.

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[6]Woodward Lundgren Associates, Geology and Soils Report, City Center Project (San Francisco, California: 1971).

TABLE III-1

Place Name	Month-Year	Magnitude
Montclair	Mar 1937	4.5
San Leandro	Dec 1942	4.3
East Oakland	Oct 1952	4.2
Albany	Oct 1952	4.0
San Leandro	Dec 1954	4.5
Concord	Oct 1955	5.4
South San Francisco	Mar 1957	4.4
Daly City	Mar 1957	4.0
Daly City	Mar 1957	5.3
Gulf of Farallones	Mar 1957	4.2
Concord	May 1958	4.1
Gulf of Farallones	Dec 1958	4.7

In addition to the Magnitude 8.3 1906 earthquake, centered at Olema, four major earthquakes were observed nearby on these fault systems in the 19th century. These included two of Magnitude 7 on the Berkeley-Hayward fault, one of Magnitude 7 on the San Andreas, and another of unestimated Magnitude on the Calaveras.

5. Climate:

Oakland is situated in one of the mildest climatic regions of North America. Prevailing westerly winds from the Pacific Ocean normally keep winters mild and summers cool. On a few days each year, temperatures do reach the 90's and have, on occasion, exceeded 100 degrees. Winter freezes of short duration have occured, but rarely.

6. Land Uses and Conditions:

Victorian Row is located in the lower Central District of Oakland. The area is typified by 200' x 300' city blocks in a grid pattern generally with 80' wide streets. The eastern boundary of the project is Broadway which is

Oakland's major downtown commercial street. The structures to the south and west of the project are mostly one and two-story commercial and residential buildings in varying degrees of condition and appearance. Two blocks to the north is the site of the City Center Urban Renewal Project now under construction. Five high-rise office buildings, a hotel and a regional shopping center are planned in this fifteen-block area. A two-block convention center is under consideration for the area between Victorian Row and City Center. Across Broadway to the east is the Chinatown Urban Renewal Project now in execution. This four-block Chinatown project will contain a combination of high-rise and low-rise structures--offices, a hotel, shops, apartments and a park. To the south of the Chinatown project is a high-rise condominum apartment building, Sun Yat-Sen House, which is now completed and open for occupancy.

The Victorian Row site itself contains 124,375 square feet net land area. Of this, 100,125 square feet is covered by buildings, 12,250 square feet of parking and 12,000 square feet is vacant.

The majority of the fourteen structures in the project contain ground floor commercial uses ranging from pawnshops to a barber college. Four structures house residential hotels comprising approximately 134 rooms. The remaining buildings were designed for commercial use, generally offices. Most of this space is presently vacant and has been for some time.

The following is a listing of the parcels and the uses contained therein at the time of this writing.

Block and Parcel No.	Uses
47-5	Apparel Manufacturing
47-6	Clothiers Shine Parlor Parking
47-7	Lock Company Loans Bookstore Gallary Cafe

Block and Parcel No. (Cont'd)	Uses
47-8	Barber College Office Hotel (22 rooms) Loans Shoe Repair Cafe Liquors and Bar
47-9	Hotel (38 rooms) Thrift Shop Rummage
47-10-11	Market
47-12-13	Studio
201-1	Vacant
201-2	Market
201-3-4	Furniture Pawnshop Hotel (75 rooms)
201-5	Pawnshop
201-6	Cafe Liquor Shoe Shine
201-7	Laundry Barber Rooms (14)
201-8	Vacant Land
201-9	Vacant Land
201-10-11	Parking
203-6	Delicatessen

Physical conditions in the area are generally poor with the exception of some ground floor commercial space. Most of the structures are in poor repair and lack basic health and safety provisions.

7. Transportation:

The East Bay is served by a coordinated system of freeways which allows for easy access to all of the parts of the region. (The chief missing link is the presently incomplete Grove/Shafter Freeway.) This system feeds the local streets in the vicinity of Victorian Row presently via the Nimitz Freeway and in the future by the Grove/Shafter Freeway which is to be five blocks to the west of the project. Surface streets in the area are presently under capacity although 1990 demand projections indicate that streets will reach capacity in that year.

The project site is well situated for service by public transportation. BART subway trains and AC Transit buses provide access from all of the East Bay and San Francisco. The City Center-12th Street BART station has entrances on Broadway, two blocks to the north of Victorian Row. Via the BART system, access is available from Fremont in 30 minutes, Richmond in 19 minutes, Concord in 27 minutes, San Francisco in 9 minutes and Daly City in 23 minutes. Headways are short on this system and the trains are swift and virtually noiseless. AC Transit has curbside loading areas at the project site. Twenty-six local routes and six express routes are available in the project vicinity.

8. Aesthetics:

The City of Oakland several years ago made improvements to Broadway. Sidewalk beautification and planting of street trees were undertaken in the downtown area. These improvements have made a positive visual contribution to the area. Washington Street was also improved from 9th Street northerly. A "semi mall" was developed with appropriate street furniture and planting. Unfortunately, this has encouraged loitering and the problems attendant thereto.

Vacant land in the project tends to collect wine bottles, beer cans and trash leading to an unsightly appearance.

The architecture of Victorian Row is pleasant and visually interesting although it has been marred over the years by ground floor "modernization," untasteful signs and repair typify many of the structures.

In general, the project area in its present condition and use is not particularly inviting although the opportunity is there to create a visually exciting place.

9. Noise:

No noise measurements have been made on the site itself. However, it can be assumed that noise levels are typical of those in downtown environments. Measurements were made for the City Center Project along Broadway and 11th Streets. It was found that generally the existing levels exceeded those termed "discretionary--normally acceptable for residential areas" by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development. (65dba for eight hours of the day or more).

10. Air Quality:

Oakland is generally well ventilated, being located on the east side of San Francisco Bay roughly opposite the Golden Gate wind gap. Under light wind conditions, however, air quality tends to deteriorate as pollutants generated in San Francisco and Oakland are trapped by the East Bay hills and by a temperature inversion caused by a cold air layer being caught between the warm urban surface layer and the warm ocean layer that was uplifted as it passed over the coastal ridge.

Local pollutants are primarily created from gasoline and oil by-products as they are released into the air. Episodes of photochemical smog (oxidants) occur most frequently in the summer, in the middle of the day. Carbon monoxide, nitrogen oxides and hydrocarbons exhibit two daily peaks, both corresponding to peak auto traffic volumes. Generally, carbon monoxide and hydrocarbon emission rates increase as auto speeds are reduced, while nitrogen oxides increase with higher engine compression ratios and temperatures.

Maximum Hourly Average Concentration of Air Contaminants PPM

California Air Resource Board Monitoring Station, 1111 Jackson Street, Oakland

	Standards	1972 Oct.	Nov.	Dec.	1973 Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sep.
Oxidant OX	0.08 ppm (160 ug/m^3)	0.07	0.05	0.01	0.03	0.04	0.04	0.09	0.07	0.22	0.14	0.05	0.12
Carbon Monoxide CO	35 ppm (40 mg/m^3)	9	11	4	2	10	4	6	5	8	7	5	9
Nitrogen Dioxide NO	0.25 ppm (ug/m^3)	0.14	0.12	0.05	0.04	0.10	0.09	0.15	0.10	0.06	0.14	0.14	0.17
Hydrocarbons HC	0.24 ppm (160 ug/m^3)*	9	9	5	3	8	6	6	6	3	6	5	10

*Three hour averaging time (6-9 AM).

11. Public Facilities and Services:

a) Wastewater Treatment. Wastewater generated by the development would be transported through lines under the management of the Department of Public Works, City of Oakland, to the Water Pollution Control Facility of Special District #1 (SD1) of the East Bay Municipal Utilities District (EBMUD).

The existing wastewater treatment plant of SD1 has the capacity to give primary treatment to a maximum of 128 million gallons per day (MGD). This involves removal of settleable solids and disposal of the remainder of the effluent into San Francisco Bay. Sludge is collected and used for landfill purposes. The average annual daily flow is 85 MGD. Wet weather, however, can cause flows of more than 200 MGD. This is due to infiltration problems, sixty percent of which are caused by the leakage of runoff water into sanitary sewer lines, and forty percent by illegal storm drain connections to the sanitary system.[7] When the flow surpasses 130 MGD, various bypass measures are enacted to relieve the excess load at the plant. A total of 950 MG (three percent annual flow) were bypassed in 1972 and sent into the bay untreated.[8]

Upgrading and expansion of the SD1 facility is planned in order to meet the standards of the Federal Environmental Protection Agency and the State Water Quality Control Board. The projected capacity will provide secondary treatment of at least 168 MGD and primary treatment of 290 MGD of wastewater and will achieve a better efficiency of treatment.

Many of the problems associated with increased wet weather flows will be eliminated as plant improvement proceeds. The project site lies within one of the last major areas in Oakland having a combined storm and sanitary sewer system. The Department of Public Works, using revenue from its sewer service charge, plans to separate and overhaul these lines.

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[7]Metcalf and Eddy, Stormwater Problems and Control in Sanitary Sewers - Oakland and Berkeley, California (March, 1971).

[8]Dolan, R., Interim Report on Wet Weather Flows in the Sanitary Sewer Systems Served by EBMUD Special District No. 1 (December, 1972).

b) Solid Waste Disposal. The Oakland Scavenger Company, a private firm, is under contract to the City of Oakland for the collection and disposal of solid waste within the City. This is taken to the Davis Street Dump, a fill and cover landfill in San Leandro. A minimum of reclamation involving ferrous metals, cardboard and newspaper is practiced.

It is expected that this site will remain operable for only a few more years. New disposal locations are presently undetermined, while suitable alternative areas are very scarce. Other East Bay municipalities are also experiencing increasing difficulties with solid waste disposal and the depletion of acceptable landfill sites. It is evident that the present system is insufficient to meet Oakland's future solid waste needs.

c) Gas and Electricity. Gas and electricity will be supplied to the site by Pacific Gas & Electric Company, East Bay division.

d) Water. The water supply for the area is under the jurisdiction of the East Bay Municipal Utilities District. Water comes from the Pardee Reservoir on the Mokelumne River in the Sierra Nevada. Approximately 105 million gallons (MG) of water is consumed daily within the City of Oakland.

Per capita water consumption in the East Bay is about 205 gallons per day. Although a large portion of this average is attributable to industry, daily consumption is still considered very high (corresponding per capita consumption in Los Angeles and San Francisco is 185 and 130 gallons per day respectively). Growth consumption has been steadily rising by four gallons per capita a day annually for the past twenty-one years.

e) Public Safety. Victorian Row is located in an area of heavy crime rate. The crime situation for this site was aggrevated by the clearance of the first six blocks of the City Center Project. This had the effect of further consolidating the problems of the lower Central District into a small area. Prostitution, drugs, loitering and drunkenness on the streets in and around the site are major problems. Shoplifting in the stores immediately adjacent to the project is creating economic difficulties for those merchants. While the crime rate in downtown has generally been decreasing over the last five years, the image of the area below 10th Street remains one of winos, panhandlers and drunks.

Additionally, the fire hazard in the area is high. The structures are old and most are poorly maintained creating a critical problem. The American Insurance Association has designated this area as a "high conflagration breeding" area because of the potential for uncontrolled fire.

The earthquake hazard is another safety problem. Most of the structures were developed in an era when little regard was given to earthquake design and consequently could be dangerious in a moderate to heavy earthquake.

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

1. Demographic Character:

Results of a recent, though preliminary, relocation survey indicates that the Victorian Row/Old Oakland project area presently consists of approximately 34 businesses and 134 individuals residing in partially occupied resident hotels, rooming houses and a live-in alcohol treatment center. Block Group statistics from the 1970 Census of Population and Housing, although tabulated for four additional blocks surrounding the project area, reveal the following profile: Residing in the area is a preponderance of males (89%) 45 years old or older (69%), living alone in single rented rooms within structures of 10 or more units. Close to 40% of the residents are non-white, the majority of these being Black and Oriental. There are no owner-occupied or single unit dwellings in the project area, and 1970 figures indicated an 18% vacancy rate in renter-occupied units. Ninety-four percent of the units lacked complete kitchen facilities, 84% lacked one or more plumbing facilities, and residents of 84% of all units utilized shared toilet facilites.

Unemployment for the census tract in which the project area is located was 29% in 1970 at a time when the City's unemployment rate was reported to be 8%. The median income for families and unrelated individuals in the census tract--$2,478--was likewise disproportionate to the comparable City median of $6,787. At that time 43% of households within the tract, were reported as having incomes below poverty level* compared to 17% Citywide. The mean gross rent paid was approximately half that of the City's $100 average: within the block group where the project area is located, 96% of the residents were paying under $79 in monthly rental.

*$3,743 for a nonfarm family of four in 1969.

Supplementing this data is information gained and projected on the basis of the previously mentioned October 1975 relocation survey. Interviews conducted indicate that the majority of the area's current residents are expected to be elderly and/or handicapped, with a high incidence of alcoholism and a resulting low expectation of employability. It appears that incomes are primarily derived from social security, supplemental income and general assistance. Rents currently paid range from approximately $23-$65 a month.

2. Economic Character:

Estimated taxable retail sales in the two-block area in 1968 were roughly $3 million.* This sales total includes primarily food purchased from grocery stores and taxable food and drink purchased from bars, cafes and liquor stores, as well as a small amount of consumer goods. These estimated sales yielded taxes to the City of Oakland in the amount of $28,500. Based on an estimate of $200 million in total retail sales for the Oakland Central retail area in 1970, the project area accounted for approximately 1.5% of downtown retail sales.

The Alameda County Assessor's appraisal for the project area in 1975/76 showed an assessed value of $355,000, .2% of the assessed value of downtown properties. With a City tax rate of $2.96 per $100, annual property tax yield to the City from the project area is $10,500.

Total taxable sales in the City of Oakland in 1970 were $919 million; the project area's $28,500 million in taxable sales contributed .003% to the total. Total gross assessed value in the City of Oakland was approximately $1.3 billion in 1975/76. Thus the assessed value of the project area is .03% of the City's total.

III. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. Impact on Natural Resources:

Because the project area was urbanized many years ago thereby altering natural drainage and eliminating natural vegetation and wildlife, there are no remaining natural resources that will be impacted. However, the project will re-introduce some vegetation into the area through the planting of trees and shrubs along the public right-of-ways.

*Based on data for similar blocks within the City Center project.

2. Impact on Man-Made Features:

The project will substantially alter the up keep of existing buildings that have a Victorian architectural character. The facades of these buildings will be retained in basically their original design and will be repaired and renovated. This rehabilitation work will not attempt to use original materials but rather will use contemporary materials to preserve the original character and flavor of the facades.

It is likely that the interiors of most buildings will be completely reconstructed in order to provide modern utilities and floor space arrangements suitable to present-day occupancy. Some interiors may be preserved in approximately their original condition but this will be at the option of the owner undertaking rehabilitation.

Land that is presently vacant and properties containing structures not having a Victorian architectural character may eventually be developed with new buildings. Where such new construction takes place, it will not be required to duplicate an original Victorian building style but will only be required to present a design that is in keeping with the overall Victorian architectural character of the area.

3. Impact on Geology and Soils:

No environmental impacts on the project area's geology are expected; no excavation for basements is anticipated. Eventual construction of parking structures on presently vacant or open use land would commit the soil resource irretrievably. However, off-street parking lots (or eventually parking structures) are needed, and the high value of the project area as a site for preservation of valuable structures minimizes the detrimental value of this loss of the soil resource.

4. Seismicity:

The rehabilitation of buildings to be preserved and any construction of new buildings will be designed so as to withstand seismic shock. Proper emergency exits and related safety features will be introduced as part of plans for the rehabilitation of the structures.

5. Noise Impact:

Although the project area will attract some increase in auto traffic, it is expected that a significant volume

of patronage to the area will arrive on foot from nearby office developments. During daytimes, any increase in auto traffic noise would be drowned out by the auto noise coming from the adjacent freeway and would not be a noticeable increase over current levels.

6. Air Quality Impact:

The project's chief air pollution impact would come from automobile traffic attracted to the site if additional parking structures are eventually constructed. However, the economic feasibility such parking structures has not yet been demonstrated, and until additional parking capacity is provided within the project area, additional parking needs will have to be served off-site.

Rehabilitation and occupancy of the upper floors of structures within the project area, many of which are now vacant because of their extreme deterioration, would increase the total energy liberated on the site which would escape as waste heating into the air. The small size of the project indicates, however, that any such excess heating would not be likely to change perceptibly the temperature of Central Oakland.

7. Aesthetic Impact:

The project will preserve the facades of all architecturally significant buildings and will bring about a complete renovation of the structures. Limited improvements in the public right-of-ways will be undertaken--street tree planting and curb, gutter and sidewalk repairs. The interiors of buildings generally will not be preserved although there are some interiors that retain the flavor of original construction despite their deterioration. It is anticipated that modern use of the interiors of the structures will reuqire substantial changes in floor plans, accouterments and utilities thereby modifying the original interior finishes.

B. SOCIO-ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. Land Use and Demographic Impact:

The project will result in a significant change in the physical condition of structures and their occupancy. The structures will be rehabilitated to modern code standards. Residential facilities now existing in the project will be converted mainly to office activity occupancy. This will result in the displacement of as

many as 134 individuals now residing in hotels within the project area. It is not now known how many of the 34 businesses occupying the area will be displaced permanently. However, all will be impacted by the project, first through rehabilitation activities and later through the significantly higher rent levels which will be asked for rehabilitated commercial space. Consequently, the project will result in a reduction of cheap substandard housing in the Oakland Central District and of cheap standard and substandard commercial and office space.

At this time, it is not possible to predict the new locations persons and firms will occupy after relocation. However, it seems likely that some displaced businesses will relocate into vacancies in commercial facilities immediately south and west of the project area. Previous experience with relocation of residents of the City Center Project suggests that they will find new accommodations partly in the Central District and partly throughout Oakland.

2. Economic Impact:

A measure of the economic impact of the project is given by the expected change in the market value of properties in the project area from $1,420,000 in 1975/76 to $9,080,000 after completion of all the rehabilitation activities. No projection of retail sales after rehabilitation has been made because the tenant mix has not yet been determined and different retail tenancies generate significantly different volumes of sales per square foot. Nevertheless, it is projected that the area will contain 60,000 square feet of retail commercial floor space attracting 1,620 customers per day. In addition, there will be approximately 100,000 square feet of office space that creates 400 jobs. Visitors to the offices are estimated at 150 per day.

The project is proposed to be financed through tax increments. The total amount of tax increments needed to repay the public costs of the project (realized at the outset of project execution through the sale of tax increment bonds) is estimated at $4,925,000. Alternatively, if the City of Oakland chose to finance the project out of general revenues, these tax increments would be available to other taxing bodies instead of being used to pay off the tax increment bonds. However, because the City does not have general revenues to finance the project, there would be no project without the use of tax increments, and therefore, the substantial increase in market value of properties after rehabilitation which the tax increments draw upon would not even come into existence.

3. Impact on Public Services and Facilities:

The impact of the project on public facilities and services--waste water, solid waste disposal, gas and electricity and water--is expected to be minimal because the project area is already occupied (except for some upper story floor space). Rehabilitation of the properties will change the nature of occupancy and will generally increase demands on public services and facilities. However, the total size of the project--6,000 square feet of retail space and 100,000 square feet of office space--is so small in relation to the Oakland Central District that the marginal change on affected public services will be minimal.

Rehabilitation of the project area is likely to reduce expenditures for public safety because the improved environment will be less conducive to prostitution, drugs, loitering or drunkenness on the streets.

4. Circulation and Parking Impacts:

As may be noted in the following table, approximately 566 autos would be attracted into the area on the assumption that parking was provided within the project area. However, it is expected that this demand will be satisfied by existing parking facilities and by a new parking structure located beneath the new public park to be built in the Chinatown Project immediately east of Broadway. Therefore, the project will generate this traffic impact but it is not expected that the impact will be served on site. The thoroughfare system serving the Central District together with the Nimitz-Grove/Shafter Freeway network are expected to be adequate to handle the additional vehicular circulation.

PARKING PROJECTION*

Retail Commercial: 1,620 person trips @ 50% by auto
= 810 person trips by auto

- 810 person trips by auto at 2 times per person = 405 persons
- 405 persons @ 1.2 persons per auto = 338 autos
- 337 autos @ turnover rate of 4 = 85 parking spaces

Office Employees:

- 400 employees @ 50% by auto = 200 emps. by auto
- 200 employees by auto @ 1.2 persons per auto = 167 autos
- Turnover rate of one = 167 parking spaces

Office Visitors:

- 150 vicitors @ 50% by auto = 75 visitors by auto
- 75 by auto @ 1.2 per auto = 63 autos
- 63 autos @ turnover rate of 3 = 21 parking spaces

TOTAL PROJECTION PARKING DEMAND: 273 parking spaces

*Assumptions: Parking turnover rate -

Retail Commercial: 4

Office Employees: 1

Office Visitors: 3

TRAFFIC PROJECTION[9]

Retail Commercial:	60,000 sq. ft. @ 27 person trips/1000 sq. ft. =	1,620 person trips
Office Employees:	100,000 sq. ft. @ 1 employee/ 250 sq. ft. = 400 employees	
2 person trips per employee =		800 person trips
Office Visitors:	100,000 sq. ft. @ 1.5/1000 sq. ft. = 150 visitors	
2 person trips per visitor =		300 person trips
	TOTAL:	2,720 person trips

2,720 person trips x 50% (by auto) = 1,360 person trips

1.2 persons per auto = 1,133 auto trips

*Assumptions and General Rates:

Retail Commercial: 27 person trips per 1000 sq. ft. of floor area

Office Employees: One employee per 250 sq. ft. of floor area

Office Visitors: 1.5 visitors per 1000 sq. ft. of floor area

Transit Use: 50% assigned to public transit

Auto Occupancy: Average 1.2 persons per auto

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[9]City of Oakland; Traffic, Engineering and Parking Department, Central Business District; South, Parking Study (Oakland, California).

IV. ADVERSE ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WHICH CANNOT BE AVOIDED IF THE PROPOSAL IS IMPLEMENTED

The major adverse environmental effect of the project is the relocation of residents and businesses now occupying the project area.

It is possible that as many as 134 residents will be permanently displaced from the project; the exact number depends on the extent of current occupancy of the 134 hotel rooms in the project area. Residential reuse of rehabilitated structures is not contemplated nor permitted by the Plan. The cost of rehabilitating 100-year old hotels to meet modern codes for permanent residential occupancy greatly exceeds the amount residents could be expected to pay. Space in rehabilitated structures is projected to rent at 60¢ to 65¢ per square foot which would put the rent for a 1000 square foot dwelling unit at $600 to $650 a month. Therefore, office use of upstairs floors is planned.

As reported in Section II. B. 1 on Demographic Character, the project area population is estimated to be 90% male and nearly 70% of the residents are 45 years and over. Nearly 40% of the residents are non-white and the census tract containing the project area has a median income substantially below that of the City. This is the population that typically experiences severe difficulties in finding decent living accommodations.

It is possible that many of the 34 businesses and institutions occupying the project area may need to be relocated because they cannot pay the rent levels necessary in the newly rehabilitated facilities. In some instances their type of business activity is not permitted by the Plan. Typically, these are small businesses and several are oriented to serving the single male population residing in the area. These businesses can be expected to be adversely affected both by the loss of their nearby residential clientele as well as by their own relocation to a site outside the project area.

V. MITIGATION MEASURES PROPOSED TO MINIMIZE THE PROJECT'S IMPACT

The discussions and studies which led to the present proposal changed the original 1973 conception of the project in ways that have reduced its impact. Other mitigation measures will be taken in the course of project execution.

1. The project area was reduced from the 1973 proposal to include five City blocks to the present project area of approximately two City blocks. The action significantly reduced the amount of architectural preservation activities that would be carried out with renewal assistance.

2. The Community Services Division of the Oakland Redevelopment Agency will administer a comprehensive program of relocation aid and assistance to residents of the project area. This division will develop contacts on behalf of the residents with the full range of public and private social agencies including welfare, vocational rehabilitation, job training, employment, legal aid, public health, police, Veterans Administration, public housing, and other institutions. These services together with the financial payments to persons relocated will serve to mitigate the adverse impact of residential relocation. It should be noted that residents will not be required to move until a satisfactory accommodation within their means is available to them.

3. The full range of relocation services and payments will be available to businesses and institutional relocatees within the project area.

VI. ALTERNATIVES TO THE PROPOSED ACTION

The following are alternatives to the Victorian Row/Old Oakland Project as presently proposed.

1. One alternative is no project. This alternative would eventually lead to the demolition of existing structures and the construction of new higher density buildings on the site.

2. The project could be made still smaller by focusing exclusively on the 9th Street properties. This alternative would impair the economic feasibility of the undertaking because the remaining portions of the blocks between 8th and 10th Streets are needed to give the project sufficient scale for economic success.

3. The project could be larger, encompassing three additional blocks, that is, it could extend south to 7th Street and west to Clay Street. This alternative would preserve more Victorian structures and further improve the economic feasibility of the rehabilitation effort. However, the public costs of this larger project are not within Oakland's financial means.

4. The area could be regulated through special zoning controls without reliance on the redevelopment powers of a project. This alternative would greatly reduce the amount of public expenditures involved but would not prompt positive preservation actions by property owners. Zoning provides no guarantee that each property owner will upgrade his/her property. By contrast, a renewal project can ensure positive change through its legal power to acquire property from an owner not interested in rehabilitation and resell it to one who

is interested, thereby ensuring concerted action by all. In the rare case where the zoning alternative does bring change, it would be accompanied by the same residential relocation, but without public assistance and financial benefits.

5. The project could have been designed as a residential project over ground floor commercial. This alternative was not deemed desirable; nor is it feasible because of the extremely weak market for new residential developments (or newly rehabilitated dwellings) in the Oakland Central District.

6. Alternatively, the project could be designed for clearance and redevelopment for a more intensive use. This is a feasible alternative. The project area will have an enhanced site value upon completion of the City Center, Chinatown projects and the downtown Convention Center. However, this was not judged a desirable alternative in the light of the City's wish to retain these Victorian structures.

VII. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SHORT-TERM USES OF THE PEOPLE'S ENVIRONMENT AND ENHANCEMENT OF LONG-TERM PRODUCTIVITY

As a historical preservation effort, the Victorian Row/Old Oakland project will protect the area for the benefit and enjoyment of Oakland and Bay Area residents. The overall effect of the project is to prevent undesirable short-term uses of the site (e.g., demolition to create off-street parking lots or further disinvestment by failure to make repairs). Instead, the project will guarantee the long-term viability of this area as a valuable historical and architectural resource.

VIII. IRREVERSIBLE ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES

If the project should be implemented, it will consume energy and other non-renewable resources. The relocation of residents and businesses from the project area would be irreversable (although re-entry of some businesses is possible). The area would be permanently devoted to the preservation of these Victorian structures although changes in occupancy of the coming years would be anticipated.

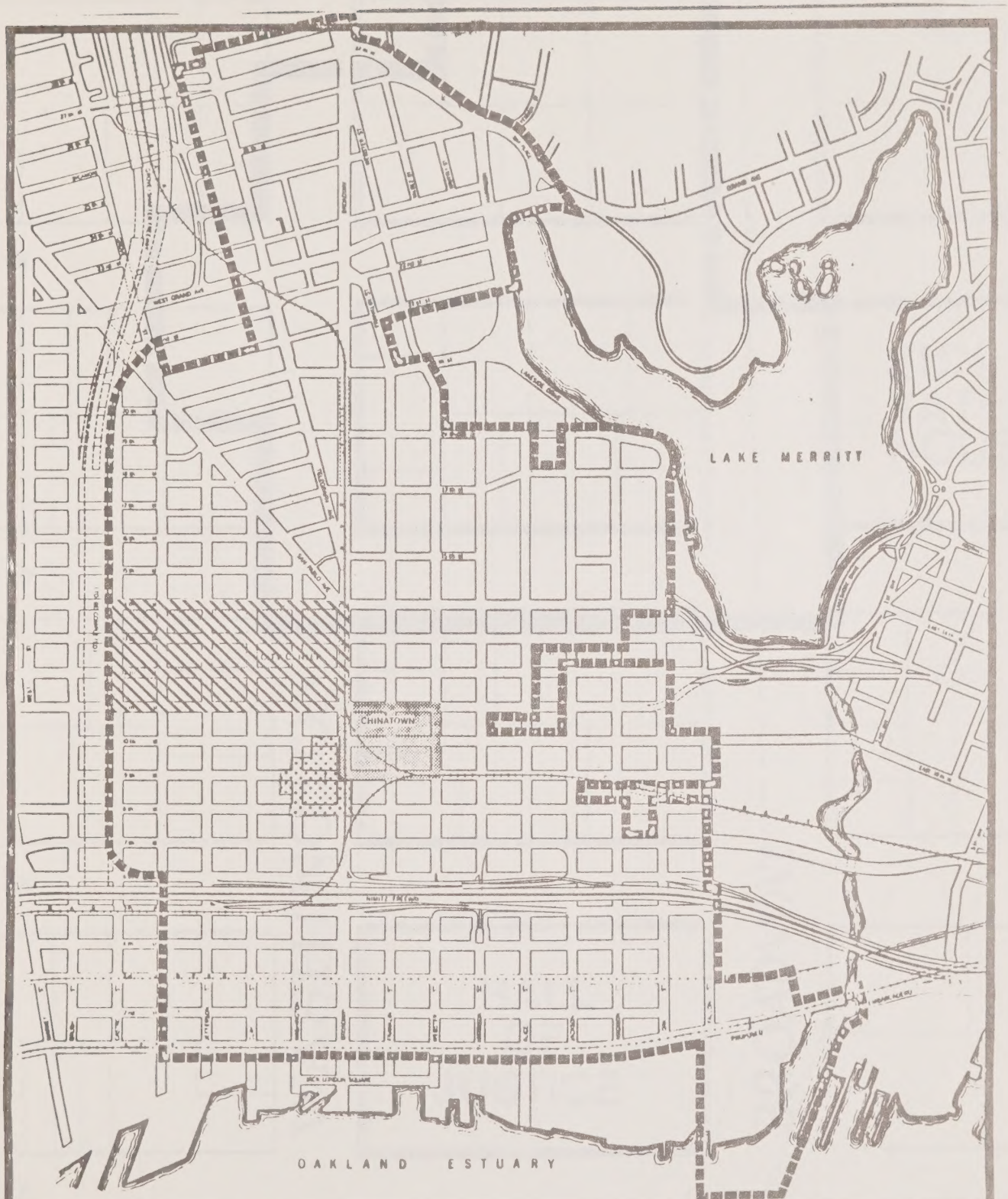
IX. GROWTH IMPACTS

The project is expected to make a net addition to the amount of office and commercial activity in the Oakland Central District. The project might divert some patronage from existing stores, but the distinctive nature of the shops and office space to be created suggests that it will have a significant positive net impact. At the same time it should be recognized that by preventing the

demolition of existing structures and their replacement by higher density developments, the project probably results in less growth than would occur if no project were established.

X. ORGANIZATIONS AND PERSONS CONSULTED

1. Alameda County Historical Society
2. Central Business District Association
3. Junior League of Oakland - East Bay, Inc.
4. Landmarks Preservation Advisory Board
5. Oakland Chamber of Commerce
6. Oakland City Planning Commission
7. Project Area Property Owners (All)
8. Victorian Preservation Society



CENTRAL DIST. URBAN RENEWAL AREA

LAND ACQUISITION MAP

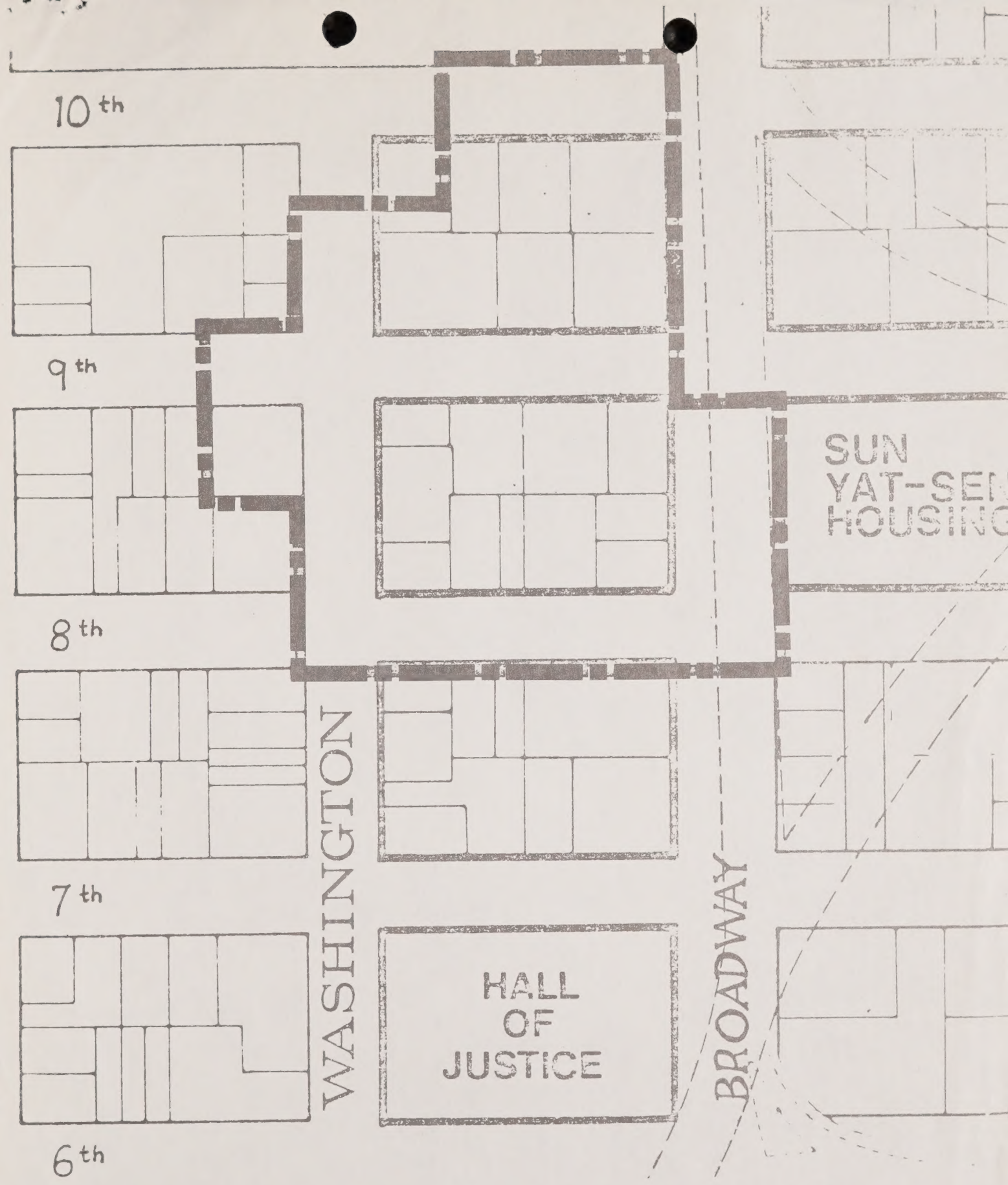
URBAN RENEWAL AREA BOUNDARY

CITY CENTER PROJECT ACQ. AREA

CHINATOWN PROJECT ACTION AREA

VICTORIAN ROW/ OLD OAKLAND PROJECT AREA

REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY OF THE CITY OF OAKLAND
NEIGHBORHOOD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM APPLICATION
Code no: R 213 Exhibit no: 2 Date: '73



VICTORIAN ROW/OLD OAKLAND PROJECT

